

**Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and Mission,
Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder
Committee (BBASC) meeting**

Thursday, June 27, 2013 at 10:00 am

SAWS' Customer Service Building, Room CR-145, 2800 US Hwy 281 North
San Antonio, TX

MINUTES

Members Present: Suzanne Scott, Chair; Diane Wassenich, Vice-Chair; Tyson Broad; Dick Fritz (for Thurman Clements); Stephen Fotiades; Jack Campbell; Milan Michalec; Chris Hale; Jerry James; Mike Mecke; Con Mims; James Murphy; Mike Peters; Hope Wells (for Robert Puente); Jennifer Ellis; Doris Cooksey; Walter Womack

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Discussion and Agreement on Agenda

The members agreed to accept the agenda as drafted.

Approval of Minutes from October 30, 2012

The members requested that a portion of the October 30, 2012 draft minutes under the section entitled "Discussion Regarding GSA BBASC Stakeholder informal request for GSA BBEST..." be revised to clarify that Dr. Tim Bonner and Sam Vaughn's submitted comments were attached to these minutes. No additional changes were requested and the minutes with the minor revision were approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2013

The minutes from the February 28, 2013 BBASC meeting were approved.

**Report on Mission-Aransas national Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)
"Balancing Freshwater Inflows in a Changing Environment" Study**

Kiersten Madden, Ph.D., NERR Stewardship Coordinator, briefed the BBASC members over the NERR's progress on the freshwater inflows studies' four main objectives (1) effects of land use and climate change on freshwater inflows, (2) improvement of inputs to the TxBLEND salinity model, (3) focal species identification, prioritization, research development, and (4) construction of a system dynamics model. Chair Scott inquired as to when the studies would be completed and whether the level of stakeholder involvement was adequate. Dr. Madden indicated that the project will be completed in one year and a final report will be available at that time. She indicated that the NERR was comfortable with the amount of stakeholder involvement. Dr. Madden also informed the group that a RESTORE workshop will be held at the NERR facility in Port Aransas, TX from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on July 16, 2013.

**Report on GBRA Texas Instream Flow Program: Full Study Reach and
Environmental Study**

Nolan Raphelt, TWDB, updated the BBASC members regarding the status of the Texas Instream Flow Program Lower Guadalupe River Study. He summarized the stakeholder

involvement as well as described the study extent (Guadalupe River at Seguin, TX to its confluence with the San Antonio River). He indicated that the draft study design will be submitted to the study design work group for review by the end of summer. It will then be submitted for scientific peer review. Chair Scott inquired as to when implementation of the study plan will occur, whether completion of the project requires variation in flow, and what date the final report will be available? Mr. Raphelt indicated that the study design will be implemented immediately once it has gone through review and is finalized, that sampling efforts are triggered by certain variations in flow, and that the final report is due out December 2016.

Ed Oborny, BIO-WEST, summarized the current status of the environmental study undertaken by GBRA and BIO-WEST. He stated that data collection has been underway for one year and that they are currently in their second year of sampling. He indicated the study would be completed by the end of 2014. Tyson Broad inquired as to the selection of Cannonade as a representative reach for the lower Guadalupe, and Mr. Oborny explained that the Cannonade stretch captured all habitat types of those observed throughout the entire Gonzales to Cuero reach.

Report on SARA Texas Instream Flow Program and EDYS Modeling

Steve Raabe, SARA, provided a brief update on SARA's TIFP and EDYS Modeling efforts. He indicated that the TIFP study will be concluded within one year and a final report will be made available at that time. Mr. Raabe stated that the EDYS (ecosystem simulation model for San Antonio Bay) modeling effort has completed its second year with work expected to continue. Continued work includes incorporating new lidar data into the model which will enhance its performance and simulation capabilities. Members inquired as to the ability of EDYS to effectively model transitional zone dynamics, such as terrestrial to aquatic (river and estuarine) habitats and methods of species selection for behavior models. Mr. Raabe confirmed that transitional zones can be modeled effectively if ample data is available, and he stated that species selection depends on how easily they can be integrated into the model. BBASC member, Jack Campbell, communicated concern about the BBASC's focus on basin studies and continued data collection rather than applying direct strategies to improve instream flows as well as freshwater inputs to bays and estuaries. Moreover, he expressed frustration with the perceived lack of results produced through the SB3 process. Chair Scott stated in response that progress can be slow when numerous stakeholder entities are involved as well as resource and funding limitations; however, the BBASC has made significant progress in achieving its goals.

Work Plan Update and Discussion Regarding Funding of Environmental Flows Work Plan for Adaptive Management for Guadalupe - San Antonio

Brian Mast, SARA, provided an update and handout summarizing the current status of work plan projects. He requested that each BBASC member provide feedback on this list to make it as comprehensive as possible. Chair Scott informed the BBASC members that the legislature had designated a total of \$2 million to SB3 basins for work plan implementation, with \$750,000 earmarked specifically for GSA. Jennifer Ellis explained, from her conversation with Carla Guthrie, TWDB, that the funds would be available starting September 1, 2013 and must be designated for use within the following fiscal year. The consensus among BBASC members was that a process for prioritizing

and applying for state funds would need to be developed. Members were in agreement that the BBASC should outline this process before September 1st. Members also unanimously agreed to the formation of a work group to identify studies that address data gaps and potential study sponsors as well as evaluate the funding needs of work plan projects. Work group members include Chair Scott, Vice-Chair Wassenich, Tyson Broad, Mike Peters, Debbie Magin, Jerry James, and Dr. Elizabeth Smith.

Jennifer Ellis, NWF, provided an overview of the RESTORE Act. She indicated that RESTORE funds will be subdivided into differing “pots” and administered by numerous entities, such as NOAA and the GCERC - Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. Ms. Ellis indicated that a formal application process for RESTORE funds has not been developed; however, an initial plan has been drafted and is open for public comment through July 8, 2013. Members were encouraged to visit the website RestoreTheGulf.gov to gain more information and provide comments on the proposed plan. A handout depicting the distribution of funds was also provided.

Discussion on future dates and times of GSA BBASC meetings for 2013

The BBASC members agreed to meet on Thursday, August 22, 2013. At this time, Walter Womack announced his resignation as the Regional Water Planning Group representative.

Possible Agenda Items for the next GSA BBASC meeting

Members discussed the following items for future agendas:

- Presentation from Dr. Tim Bonner
- Update on the USGS/GBRA saltwater barrier gage
- Presentation regarding the headwater springs of the Blanco, Medina, and Guadalupe Rivers (Mike Mecke suggested a TPWD representative)
- Coastal and Marine Spatial Processes and Coastal Management under the RESTORE Act (Dr. Jim Gibeaut, Harte Research Institute)
- State Methodology for Estimating Inflows (Cindy Loeffler?)
- BBASC Vacancy (representative for Regional Water Planning Groups)

Public Comment

James Dodson, SABP, informed the group that the San Antonio Bay Partnership will be soliciting public input concerning a planning study, focused on public access and land use, in Sea Drift, TX on July 25th at 5 p.m. He also announced that San Antonio Bay Day would be September 28th in Sea Drift. Additionally, BCRAGD provided an update on the status of ongoing spring flow studies in Bandera County.

Adjourn